

# Ningbo: China's Sixth Trillion-level Hub in Foreign Trade

By Dong Na

On December 10, Ningbo's open economy ushered in a historic moment — in the first 11 months of this year, Ningbo accomplished an import and export volume of 1.09 trillion yuan, an increase of 22.2% year-on-year.

This is the first time Ningbo's foreign trade exceeded the trillion-level threshold, becoming the country's sixth "trillion city in foreign trade" following Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing, Suzhou, and Dongguan.

## Opened the Door to the International Market

As one out of every four Ningbo people is engaged in work related to foreign trade, the city is a classic example of highly advanced export-oriented economy.

On December 11 of this year, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of China's accession to the WTO was marked. On this special occasion, Ningbo's foreign trade breakthrough became another milestone to echo the celebration.

Foreign trade in Ningbo started to blossom as early as in 1988 when the city was recognized as one of the cities under separate state planning and given the authority to manage import and export for the first time. After years of hard work, in 2020, Ningbo ranked sixth in China with 978.69 billion yuan of import and export volume, and fifth in China with 640.7 billion yuan of export volume.

In 2001, the year of China's accession to the WTO, Ningbo had a mere of 2,184 foreign trade firms with a trade volume less than 10 billion U.S. dollars. A decade later, the number of market entities involved in Ningbo's foreign trade had doubled by 5 times, while the import and export volume by 10 times. Today, more than 23,000 entities take part in the city's foreign trade, creating a total volume of more than one trillion yuan. Compared with 2001, the total volume and industry size increased respectively by about 10 times and 16 times.

Ying Xiuzhen, Vice Presi-



Workshop of an automobile control system enterprise in Ningbo.

[Photo by Xu Neng]

dent of China-Base Ningbo Group (CBNB), has been engaged in foreign trade for nearly 40 years. In her opinion, China's accession to the WTO has brought sweeping changes to foreign trade and opened the door to the international market for Chinese manufacturing.

Ying still remembers that in the 1990s, the commodities at the Canton Fair were mostly agricultural products or primary processed products such as pull-overs, refrigerator stickers, and electronic clocks. After joining the WTO, China has created a very well-developed supply chain. "The transformation from 'Made in China' to 'Made with Wisdom' is very remarkable," Ying said.

## High-quality Development of Private Enterprises

During the past 20 years, many "front-runner" of Ningbo's foreign trade now, started the journey of high-quality develop-

ment with the help of overseas markets.

Now a "trade giant" whose business spans foreign comprehensive services, cross-border e-commerce, bulk imports, and auto sales, CBNB has been rooted in Ningbo for decades, starting from a small enterprise. Last year, the import and export volume of CBNB reached 28.1 billion yuan, not only keeping the championship of foreign trade in the city for many years, but also ranking among the top 500 private enterprises in China.

Loctek started to engage in foreign trade in 2002 when its main business was the production of stents. Since 2011, Loctek has created its own brand to take on a significant share in the European and American markets with its electric lifting tables. Now, it is listed among the national manufacturing "single area champions".

The Beifa Group, a long-time player in the pen industry, has not only succeeded in the

manufacturing of high-end pen refill, but also expanded its business to integrate the production chain and platforms, leading more upstream and downstream enterprises to go abroad. Now their products sell in more than 200 countries around the world.

## To Build a New Type of International Trade Center

As a national advanced manufacturing base, Ningbo has a strong manufacturing foundation. A number of private enterprises with excellent quality and vitality have emerged.

At present, Ningbo has 63 national manufacturing "single area champions" and 182 national "little giant" enterprises, which are ranked first and third respectively in the cities.

At the same time, not only does Ningbo Zhoushan Port send "Made in China" products to all over the world, but also introduces more and more global fine goods into China and delivers

them to thousands of households.

With the "Belt and Road" initiative, emerging markets have become important drivers of Ningbo's foreign trade growth. In 2020, Ningbo's trade with countries along the "Belt and Road" accounted for one-fifth of the city's trade volume.

While expanding the market, Ningbo is also using digitalization to continuously reshape trade, cross-border e-commerce is becoming a new growth engine of Ningbo's foreign trade. On November 11 this year, Ningbo became the first city with 100 billion yuan of cross-border e-commerce retail imports.

According to the city's plan, Ningbo will strive to accomplish more than 2 trillion yuan of import and export volume in 2025, and even more to promote the development of cross-border e-commerce, digital trade, service trade, and other emerging industries to build the city into a new type of international trade center.

## SPOTLIGHT

### A Relay in the Market: Selling Vegetables and Warming Hearts

By Gou Wen

A few days ago, Sun Zhongbo, a greengrocer who lived in the Zhenhai District and owned a market stall in Yonggui market, Haishu District, was unable to commute and attend to his business because of COVID-19 prevention measures. It seemed that all vegetables were going to be wasted.

After learning about it, Shao Li, a warm-hearted customer who usually buy vegetables in the market decided to sell vegetables for Sun Zhongbo.

According to Shao Li, she went to the market as usual, but Sun Zhongbo was not there. She sent a message to Shao to see if everything was ok and then, she knew that Sun lived in Zhenhai.

"I can try to sell instead of you, or it will go to waste!" On WeChat, Shao encouraged Sun to stay at home for supporting epidemic prevention and she took on the task of selling vegetables.

To sell vegetables quickly, Shao posted the information on her WeChat. Soon, the residents who lived close to the market came to buy vegetables. A relay started.

"I heard about this message and then came. I bought green melons, carrots, and others. This is a passing-on of love and I was happy to be part of it," said Chen Dingguo.

Xia Zhongyuan, another warm-hearted customer, sent message to Shao saying that he could buy all the vegetables. He said that another volunteer, Yang Sheng'e asked him to do that at Yang's cost and deliver to others who were under home quarantine.

"I just wanted to try to help Sun minimize his loss. I didn't expect so many people came to support him in this relay. I was moved," said Shao.

Before long, all the vegetables were sold out, and careful market workers covered Sun's stall with plastic sheets. "These days, my Alipay and WeChat accounts have been receiving payment messages one after another and I felt so grateful," said Sun.

## 双语汇 Different Tongues

# 石浦渔港：渔家文化，滨海风情

By Xu Zhuwei

Located in Xiangshan, Ningbo and a well-known haven on the southeast coast of China, the Shipu Fishing Port is a crescent-shaped harbour that can accommodate tens of thousands of fishing boats.

石浦渔港位于宁波市象山县，为“月牙”状港湾，可泊万艘渔船，是东南沿海著名的避风良港。

With more than six centuries of history, the ancient Shipu City has been home to generations of fishing communities who have created and preserved rich fishing culture and customs in their sea-based livelihood. There are many old houses and historic sites in

Shipu old streets, where the traces of life left by the ancestors in the fishing port are vividly remembered.

600余年历史的石浦渔港古城，蕴含广博的渔文化和渔风情，居民世代以海为生。在石浦老街上有不少老宅和古迹，渔港先人留下的生活痕迹历历在目。

Shipu is one of the earliest cradles of marine fisheries in China. As early as in the Qin and Han dynasties, the ancestors started to fish and hunt here. It grew to be a renowned fishing port and coastal defence fortress in the Tang and Song dynasties. Today, Shipu is a national Class II open port, the No.1 fishery town in China, and a recog-



Ships in Shipu Fishing Port. / 停泊在石浦渔港的船只。

[Photo by Tang Yan] 唐严摄

nized historical and cultural town in Zhejiang Province.

石浦是中国最早海洋渔业发祥地之一，秦汉时即有先民在此渔猎生息，唐宋时已成为远近闻名的渔

商埠，海防要塞。如今，石浦是国家二类开放口岸、全国渔业第一镇、浙江省首批历史文化名镇。

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